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A Smile in the Dark

By Karen Dickerson (from MOPS.org)

"Mommy, where's my race car?" Ryan asked, running into the kitchen.

I was concentrating on slicing carrots so I answered without turning around, "I think you left it in the basement. The door's unlocked. You can go get it." I listened to his footsteps, the turn of the knob and the squeak of the opening door.

"Mommy," he whispered, "it's really dark down there."

I'm convinced the day my son turned two years old a fear switch inside of him turned on. Things that never frightened him before; heights, vacuum cleaners, flushing toilets and smoke detectors, now made him tremble. But what he feared most of all was the dark.

At bedtime I tried my best to reassure him that he was safe. Together we read books and watched videos about not being afraid. He insisted that a 100-watt bulb burn brightly in his room before he consented to sleep. Every night leaving his room I repeated, "Remember Ryan, God is always with you."

Now, quite a bit older, and having gone from 100 watts down to 60, 40, 25 and 15, Ryan is content to sleep with just a seven-watt bulb, but I knew walking down into darkness would still be overwhelming. "Just a minute," I called out to him, "I'll turn the light on for you."

I cut the last carrot and wiped my hands but when I got to the basement door I realized he was already downstairs. Thinking he didn't hear me, I shouted, "I said I'd turn the light on for you," and reached for the switch.

"I don't need a light Mommy," he declared boldly, "I'm not scared. God is with me."

I left the light off and prayed, "I see my son trusting in you and I remember that you're the only help he'll ever need." With racecar in hand, Ryan victoriously ascended the stairs. I'm not sure which one of us had the biggest grin.

From the Kitchen:



Bake Your favorite chocolate cake batter in individual mugs for a warming winter dessert!

Ingredients:

- *Cooking spray
- *Chocolate cake batter
- *Marshmallow crème

Instructions:

Simply coat the inside of oven safe mugs with cooking spray. Fill mugs *halfway* with batter. Follow the baking instructions for cupcakes on batter box. Allow to cool for about 15 minutes. Top each cake with a generous dollop of marshmallow crème and serve with a spoon. One cake mix makes enough batter for about 12 mugs.



Potty Training Aint for Wimps!

By Rozalynn Goodwin

Mops.org

Before my co-workers and I left the office for the 4th of July extended weekend one year, we shared our plans with each other. A few planned to travel, some were barbecuing at home.

I, however, was potty training my two-year old. We were determined to declare our independence from diapers and the cost that comes along with them. I really thought that if I dedicated a few days to consistently training her, we could be liberated by the following Monday! No one had the guts to tell me differently at work. They probably thought, "this poor first-time mom doesn't have a clue."

In January of the next year we were still in those Cadillac diapers they call pull-ups. I concluded that two-year-olds have slightly delayed potty timers. When they announce, "Mommy, pee-pee potty!" and we twist an ankle rushing them to the nearest restroom, it's usually still five seconds too late.

I started potty training only because everyone was telling me I should. They said my daughter was showing all the signs of potty readiness (quietly hiding in corners or behind furniture "to go" in her diaper, communicating well with a number of words, etc.) They assured me that "girls are so much more easier to train than boys" and "she is so smart—she'll get it in no time."

Then there were the mothers from the Potty Training Hall of Fame.

"My child was trained at nine months."

"By the time my child was eight months old, he just couldn't stand to be wet and would take off his own diaper to tell me he had to go."

"My daughter never wore a diaper. Right after the doctor cut the umbilical cord, she asked to be excused to go to the ladies' room."

Potty training is demanding on both the child and parent. Comparing your child's development to others and setting unrealistic goals only makes it worse and can stress you and your child out.

I knew I needed to chill after one of the times my daughter recently went potty (without the potty). While changing her pull-up, I firmly explained that big girls pee-pee on the potty and not in pull-ups. She looked up at me with the most pitiful pout and said, "I sowwy Mommy. I wub boo." (Interpretation: "I'm sorry, Mommy. I love you.") My heart melted, we embraced and I said, "I wub boo too."

That day, I freed myself from the pressures of potty training. She will get it when she is ready and I don't care when she's fully trained (as long as it's by the age of three). No pressure though ...

Creative Discipline Idea 103: The Button Jar

A BIG thank you to Shauna Letellier for speaking at our last MOPS meeting. It seems you could have spoken to us on "creative correction" forever! We had lots of interest in the book and ideas, I came upon this little technique online and thought it might be helpful to us moms who need a little creative advise in this area!

Kiddio.com



So, after reading all those great books and setting out some good rules with varying levels of success, nothing seemed to work with the very different personalities of my two oldest children (now 6 and 3 1/2) until we stumbled upon the button jar.

The idea is simple. Fill a jar with many of something (I liked the buttons since I could buy a big bag of pretty, colorful ones at Hobby Lobby for a few bucks, but marbles, coins, popsicle sticks, anything small will work) and provide an empty cup or jar for each child. Set out the rules, then put a button in their cup when you think they deserve it and remove one when they don't live up to your expectations (or, in the case of our 3 1/2 year old son, defy them outright). When a specific quantity of buttons is reached, a reward is earned. (The reward could be something simple like a trip for ice cream or to the zoo, or a large toy, depending on the motivation that your kid needs and what his/her interests are; the boy is expecting a pirate ship, our daughter would like ice skating).

Clearly, the assignment of buttons is somewhat arbitrary, but we go through periods where one child is being too rough with the baby so they are warned that when they are rough with her they are choosing to lose a button (see? they're in control, reducing the parent-child power struggle and making them accountable for their actions), but when they play nicely and follow the rules for quiet time they get a button. I'll also give out buttons when someone goes out of their way to help a sibling clean up a mess they didn't make, or asks to help empty the dishwasher (these things happen a lot more often since the button jar came along), etc. Failing to follow a rule (e.g. screaming for me from one end of the house or getting up before 6:30) loses a button. I can see this working until at least 12-13 years, although I'm expecting that the payout will be a bit bigger by then!

Upcoming times to get together:

- Coffee with Verda!
Thursday mornings 9-11am. Just bring yourself and your kiddos! Verda provides breakfast!

- Manicures and Pedicures @ Anna McCarthy's. Every other Friday @ 11-2pm. Bring a lunch dish to pass!

- MOPS playgroup every Thursday morning @ CBC gym 10-noon.

Watch calendar and emails for actual dates and cancellations!

Mommies Online

Monthly Picks:

- *Kiddio.com
- *Familyfun.go.com
- *kids.woot.com

January Craft Corner ~ Familyfun.go.com

Materials needed:

- *paper and pencil
- *waxed paper
- *cookie sheet
- *Dimensional fabric paint with glitter in it

- 1) Draw a snowflake template (smaller compact designs work best)
- 2) Lay template face up on cookie sheet and cover with wax paper
- 3) Using a thin line of fabric paint (approx 1/8 inch wide) trace the snowflake design on the wax paper, making sure all of the paint lines connect. Let the cling dry overnight. Then carefully peel it from the wax paper.



Psalm 74:17

It was you who set all the boundaries of the earth: you made both summer and winter.

Matthew 19:14

Jesus said, "Let the little **children** come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."



January Birthdays

Hannah Houdyshell: Jan 1

Beatha Kliewer: Jan. 4

February Birthdays

Keather Roth: Feb 25

Angie Moran: Feb 26

*Happy
Birthday!*

RANDOM BITS of INFORMATION:

****Are you interested in being even MORE involved with MOPS?! Then have we got the perfect place for you. On the Steering Team! We are recruiting steering members for the 2010-2011 MOPS year. If you are interested contact Trish Sargent @ 224-4338.**

****Brandi Westergren is in need of childcare ASAP! She has 2 little boys ages 5 and 1. She would need somebody 2-3 days a week, and on rare occasions maybe 4. If you are interested or know someone who might be you can contact Brandi at 280-4814 or by email at westergrenfamily@gmail.com**

**** Our first "spontaneous" event was held last Thursday here in the CBC gym. Moms came in their jammies and enjoyed fellowship with other moms along with some yummy cereal and fun playtime for the kids! Fun was had by all who attended. If you didn't make it to this one, you will still have 2 more opportunities to test your spontaneity. Be ready!**

JANUARY

2010

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
				1 Hannah Houdyshell	2	3
4 Beatha Kliewer	5 MOPS STEERING 9AM	6	7	8	9	10
11	12 MOPS 9AM	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26 MOPS 9AM	27	28 MOPS PLAYGROUP 10am	29	30	31